

The Radio

by Eva Wong, age 13, Port Moody

The radio came alive at 3:17 a.m.

Hannah froze in bed, clutching her blanket. The old radio hadn't worked in months—just static, broken dials, and silence. But now, through the crackle, a voice rasped.

“Hello?”

Her heart pounded. It wasn't a DJ or late-night talk show. The voice sounded like a man, whispering. Afraid.

“They're here.”

She sat up slowly, every hair on her arms rising.

“What... who's there?” she whispered, though she knew the radio couldn't hear her.

The man kept speaking, voice trembling. “Don't open your eyes when they come in. No matter what. Don't—”

The radio cut to static.

Panicked, Hannah reached to unplug it, but before her hand touched the cord, the floor creaked in the hallway. Slow. Heavy. Like bare feet dragging across wood.

She froze, squeezing her eyes shut.

Maybe it was her brother, but he'd moved out last year.

Maybe it was her mom, but her mom worked night shifts at the hospital.

The doorknob clicked.

The hinges groaned.

Something entered.

The air shifted. Her room turned cold, thick with the smell of wet earth. The once-familiar warmth now felt grim, hollow—like something dead was breathing beside her. Her mattress dipped, as if someone had sat at the edge.

Her heart slammed against her ribs.

Don't open your eyes.

A breath brushed her ear, damp and rattling.

Then a voice, so close it tickled her skin, whispered the same warning.

“Don’t open your eyes.”

Tears slipped down her ashen cheeks. Her limbs wouldn’t move. She couldn’t scream. She couldn’t even breathe right.

The mattress sank further. Closer.

Something touched her hand.

It traced her knuckles with a fingertip that felt too long... too sharp... too unearthly.

Then silence.

The weight lifted.

She waited. Counted seconds in her head. Five. Ten. Twenty.

Finally, she cracked one eye open, just a sliver.

Her room was empty.

The door stood closed.

The air was still again.

Relief rushed through her like warm water. She sat up slowly, wiping her tears.

The radio hissed softly in the corner, glowing faintly.

Then... the voice returned. Barely audible under the static. Whispering.

“You opened your eyes.”
